

# OVERWEIGHT AND OBESE CHILDREN IN SOUTH CAROLINA

## The Problem

- 31.5 percent of S.C. high school students are overweight or obese.<sup>1+</sup>
- Nearly 48 percent of all black rural children ages 10 - 17 years old in S.C. are overweight or obese as compared to 22.8 percent of white rural children<sup>2</sup>.
- Over 25 percent of low-income children ages 2 - 5 are overweight or obese in S.C.<sup>3</sup>.
- Among low-income children, a larger percentage of Hispanic children aged 2-5 years old (16.6 percent) were overweight as compared to White (14.9 percent) and African American (13.4 percent) children in the same age range<sup>3</sup>.
- There are more Hispanic (20.3 percent) low income children who are obese as compared to White (13.4 percent) and African American (12 percent) low income children<sup>3</sup>.
- Nationally, rates of children who are obese have tripled since the late 1970s, while rates of adolescents aged 12-19 have more than doubled in the same time period<sup>4</sup>.
- Overweight adolescents have a 70 percent chance of becoming overweight or obese adults<sup>5</sup>.
- If current trends continue, 30 percent of boys and 40 percent of girls born in 2000 will develop Type 2 diabetes, primarily due to a poor diet and lack of physical activity<sup>6</sup>.

## Overweight children are at increased risk for:

- High blood pressure
- Sleep apnea
- Type 2 diabetes
- Depression
- Asthma
- Poor self-esteem<sup>5</sup>

## Risk Factors

### Poor Diet and Physical Inactivity

- Only 20 percent of middle school students and 17.1 percent of high school students eat five or more servings of fruits and vegetables per day<sup>8, 1</sup>.
- Of high school students in S.C., 62 percent do not meet recommended levels of physical activity<sup>1</sup>.
- Over 60 percent of high school students did not attend physical education classes at all during an average school week<sup>1</sup>.
- On an average school day, 50.9 percent of middle school students watched television for three or more hours<sup>1</sup>.
- South Carolina leads the nation in the percentage of children (54.5 percent) who don't participate in after-school team sports or lessons<sup>2</sup>.
- South Carolina ranks 35th in breastfeeding rates through three months<sup>7</sup>.



## What are the solutions?

1. **Rethink your drink** - replace sugar-sweetened beverages such as soda and sports drinks with water, 1% milk\*, or 100% fruit juice.
2. **Resize your portions** - bigger is not always better.
3. **Tame the tube** - limit TV time to less than two hours per day.
4. **Move more everyday** - children need at least 60 minutes of activity per day.
5. **Eat more meals at home** - aim for at least five family meals per week.
6. **Eat more fruits and vegetables** - make colorful fruits and vegetables a big part of your diet.
7. **New moms should breastfeed their babies** - breastfeeding for at least six months reduces the risk of childhood overweight and obesity.

\*For children over the age of 2

**To learn how you can support school and community efforts to adopt policies supportive of healthy eating and active living, visit <http://www.EatSmartMoveMoreSC.org/options-for-action>.**

<sup>\*</sup>Definition of overweight: at or above the 95th percentile for body mass index, by age and sex; at risk is 85th to 95th percentile for body mass index.

<sup>1</sup>South Carolina Youth Risk Behavior Survey, 2007.

<sup>2</sup>"USC report finds overweight, obese kids more likely to live in rural America," Arnold School of Public Health, University of South Carolina, 14 Sept. 2007, 17 Sept. 2007, <http://www.sph.sc.edu/news/ruralkids.htm>.

<sup>3</sup>PedNSS, 2004

<sup>4</sup>Centers for Disease Control, National Center for Health Statistics (2000), NHANES IV short report.

<sup>5</sup>US Department of Health and Human Services. (2001). The Surgeon General's Call to Action to Prevent and Decrease Overweight and Obesity. (Rockville, MD): US Department of Health and Human Services, Public Health Services Office, Office of the Surgeon General.

<sup>6</sup>Vehkat Narayan, K. (2003). The Journal of the American Medical Association. 290: 1884-1890.

<sup>7</sup>National Immunization Survey, 2008.

Visit <http://www.scdhec.gov/health/chcdp/obesity/index.htm> for more information on obesity in South Carolina.

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